

City of Ashland – Sustainability Committee Meeting

Thursday, September 28th, 2023

6:00 pm – 7:00 pm HYBRID MEETING:

**Meeting Link: <https://meet.goto.com/740241965> | Access Code:
740-241-965 - CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS (601 Main Street W)**

Energy Action Plan, 25x25 Plan, Sourcewater Protection Plan linked here:
<https://sites.google.com/view/ashland-sustainability/themes>

Present: Dale Kupczyk, Amy Amman, Adam Zais, Lissa Radke, Kelly Westlund, Axel Peterman, Steven Wiley

Absent:

Agenda

- 1) Approval of Agenda
Peterman called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. Amman moved and Westlund seconded to approve the agenda. Motion carried.
- 2) Approval of minutes from the June 27, 2023 meeting
Peterman moved and Zais seconded. Motion carried.
- 3) Citizen Comments - None
- 4) Projects/Discussions
 - a) Lawn Care Product Use and Toxicity – Bob Laskowski (Discussion)
Peterman opened the floor to discussion. Mr. Laskowski was here two months ago and concerned about his dog being poisoned by lawn care products. Kupczyk asked Wiley to correct the spelling of Laskowski's name in the agenda/minutes. Wiley stated that he would make the correction. Radke mentioned Glyphosate which is a chemical used in some of the products and is dangerous to human and environmental health. It can impact a person's DNA, etc. Peterman is curious to know how many manufacturers use the chemical in their products. He is aware of Roundup as one product. Amman mentioned us looking into the City's usage of these products and what is used and where. Wiley stated that he had not yet been able to do this. Radke mentioned that perhaps we can look at which products have Glyphosate in them and what the City uses. Maybe we do a campaign in tandem with No Mow May next year. Amman said perhaps we can look at what it means when people have their lawns sprayed and the signs are put up on lawns. Westlund mentioned an article in Time Magazine about lawn chemicals and the range of concerns. Glyphosate is in Roundup. Public education/outreach is a good place to start. Radke mentioned that Roundup is banned in Canada. Some people from there would sometimes come and buy cases from the US and sell it. The first step is to do research, find out what the City is using, (she sees signs at Kreher Park), look at model ordinances, and do education. Radke stated that the research on how quickly it affects people is astonishing. Radke asked if we want to commit to action/next steps. Westlund agreed with looking at what the City is doing, looking at sample ordinances, and highlighting the dangerous nature at No Mow May. Radke is willing to talk to John Butler. She sees flags at Kreher Park in the spring and fall. Radke mentioned the resolution

against selling coal tar asphalt covering. Westlund will look for a sample ordinance we can look at. Peterman asked if a ban on selling would cover Walmart. Westlund and Kupczyk if he has seen anything like this come up. Kupczyk replied that he had not but suggested that the Committee can put out something in the water bills. Westlund explained that at the local level municipalities cannot necessarily ban it but if City is using it at Kreher Park we can look at the City's actions. Radke stated that she was looking up legal websites to see if products can be banned by municipalities. Apparently, they can be. If protecting the public health, etc. municipalities have a better shot. She is not necessarily recommending banning specific products since it is divisive. Westlund would like to keep on the agenda for the next meeting.

b) Waste and Recycling

Radke explained that this was Ms. Ullman's initiative. Kupczyk mentioned that he brought this up because at the beaches there are no recycling bins. He stated that the City should have them. Wiley explained that he had talked with Sara Hudson and things we need to consider. There was the staff time involved in going to each location to maintain and empty recycling bins since the City's contract with Eagle Waste did not cover these locations and it was not possible to get trucks to all locations. The Parks and Public Works Departments would have to quantify the amount of staff time, the expected costs, etc. There was also the discussion of whether people would use the bins. Wiley stated that Ms. Hudson had discussed doing a pilot program downtown to see if people would use the bins. Kupczyk stated that this should be straightforward. Westlund asked if we contract with Eagle Waste, why can't we ask them to put out say a dumpster in some locations. Zais brought up the contract for waste removal downtown. He stated that currently the City was stuck in the contract but could have its ducks in a row.

Radke stated that many things on the agenda relate to John Butler so asked if we could invite him and discuss these. For example, the seed mix was one item of several. *Radke left at 6:26 pm.* Amman asked what we are paying for and are they actually recycling these items. She stated that we should find out. Wiley said he would note and follow up.

c) Climate Change

i. 25x25 Plan further discussion

Wiley mentioned the City's lighting upgrades and WWTP solar/micro grid project. Westlund explained the potential WWTP project to Kupczyk. She would like to see it as more of a priority to get this done. Kupczyk suggested budgeting money to make this building and other buildings more energy efficient. Wiley mentioned recent staff discussions that occurred on this. Westlund mentioned the airport and incandescent bulbs there which might be a temperature issue in the winter but stated that we should have technology now to look at alternatives.

ii. City Vehicle Fleet discussion

Wiley explained where we are at with this and an example would be replacing the property maintenance vehicle with a new EV. Staff is starting to have discussions on this. Peterman asked if there is a big difference in up front costs buying an EV. Zais explained that it costs more up front but you save

money over time. He asked if drafting a resolution for Council would help. Wiley answered that it could. Westlund suggested that maybe it is a policy where moving forward we look at electric or alternative fueled vehicles. Zais stated that bicycles are superior but if you have to drive go electric. EVs shine in stop and go. There is a City Public Works truck that drives down Main Street. If this truck was switched to an EV in five years' time that would help. Peterman asked how many of City's vehicles that are pickup trucks actually need to be pickup trucks. Wiley stated that he can look into it. Westlund asked if many do double duty though such as plowing and hauling brush. She stated that in cases where vehicles do double duty pickup trucks may be beneficial.

d) Water

i. Develop Sourcewater Protection Plan Initial Recommendations

Peterman stated that Radke looked at this. The Committee tabled for the next meeting.

e) Annual Report for City Council

Wiley explained that he was working on it. Peterman stated that the thought was that rather than scrape together photos and information for 2022 let's do a report for 2023. Westlund stated that if Committee will make a report to the Council it would not hurt for the Committee to ask for a budget even if it only \$2,500. If they say no they say no but at least ask. Wiley stated that he could bring up budget question. Westlund suggested reviving the Eco-Municipality Resolution for Council. It is the way the City makes decisions and has been since 2003 or 2004. Without it hanging on the wall it is easy to forget. Peterman asked if it was possible to create a poster and hang in the hall or in the Chambers. Wiley stated that he could bring this up with staff.

f) Solar Incentives Proposal

The Committee stated that this was the WWTP proposal discussed at a previous meeting with Bill Bailey. The Committee proceeded to the next item.

g) Complete Streets

i. Discussion

Wiley explained the Ellis reconstruction. Amman asked if this could tie in with the Parks and Recreation Committee's work. Wiley believed so and explained the Parks and Recreation and Public Works Committees' efforts on the bike and ped plan. Kupczyk asked what Complete Streets is. Wiley provided an explanation. Peterman mentioned maybe putting up signs at the edge of the bike path, corridor, etc. so people can see where they can ride their bikes around Ashland. He had lived here for 7-8 years before he found out that you can bike the loop. Having some signs around downtown was a good idea. Westlund stated that bicyclists trying to navigate downtown with car doors opening is a concern so asked if moving them to other streets made sense. ATVs are supposed to stick to the 3rd Street corridor but she was not sure if there was any enforcement. Zais stated that slowing down cars more and more signs are important along with the speed indicators they trot out during the summer. Peterman suggested maybe blocking off Chapple Avenue where the bakery/Black Cat/Co-op are on weekends. Kupczyk stated that if there was no parking there then we may have people parking at businesses on Main Street. This could cause issues. Zais explained that one place to start

would be to ask the businesses what they want. Westlund explained that the aging/older population is something to consider. Peterman will speak with the Co-op and Black Cat. There was also the Jujitsu place and pregnancy center, along with residential buildings. Peterman asked if someone would like to speak with someone at the jujitsu place. Westlund asked what our ask was of the property owners. Peterman answered that we would ask them if they would like us to try closing off the block for one weekend next summer. Zais asked if we just close off a street and put cones there what does that accomplish and how are people going to react to that. Westlund added that if we can incorporate some type of programming that would help.

h) Green Tier Legacy Communities

i. Update and Annual Report Discussion

Wiley went to last quarterly meeting and there were no updates now.

i) Great Lakes Friendly Restaurant Certification

i. Discussion

No updates

j) Seed Mix

i. Discussion

Westlund asked about this. Amman explained that seed mix is full of burdock which is a big huge leaf not conducive to lawns. It is highway mix instead of grass. She wanted the City to find out why this was allowed to happen and make sure it does not happen again. It should be easy to do. She asked if MacArthur will have the same problem. Kupczyk stated that when they redid his sewer they ended up with no grass rather it was just weeds in people's yards. Amman stated that the City needs to look at the contract and when they redo streets have something in there saying that they cannot use highway mix. She stated that she was not sure if there was remediation on what people have done. She was happy to write the language.

k) Community Garden Update

Peterman explained that they were wrapping up the season. There were four more weeks until shut down. The tomato plants were dying off. It was a struggle to get people to harvest their stuff since they think the season is over. Peterman is beginning to look at what they will do next year. He is looking to expand again and has been in communication with Ms. Hudson and the Parks and Rec Committee. The group doubled the size of the garden this year and are looking to double it again. They are looking to install permanent deer fencing. They will look to have smaller plots for people that want to be involved in gardening. As a satellite garden he is looking at Carlson's lumber yard. Off to the side on 6th street there is a strip of land the next block over from the Fire Station. He will ask if they are interested in letting the Beaser garden put tarps over planters in spring and make it a public orchard space. Westlund likes idea and maybe the Beautification Council would also. He is looking at ways to establish a paid manager position for the Beaser garden. He is also talking with Northland College and their new president who is supportive of community agriculture. Peterman would like a paid at least part time position. Zais is happy to make the introduction to the brothers that own Carlson's.

5) Future agenda items

Westlund explained that Bayfield County is funding an outreach position for CDBG programs for housing. There are opportunities for weatherization programs. Focus on Energy stuff. Wiley stated that he can put on if we want more discussion. Peterman asked if we should remove the Annual Report. He stated that we can still work on it but can take it off. Wiley stated that he would take this off.

6) Adjournment

Westlund moved to adjourn and Zais seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.

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